

Newburyport Waterfront Trust
Online Meeting
April 20, 2022
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Wilbur Shenk called an online meeting of the Newburyport Waterfront Trust to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were Trustees Wilbur Shenk, Leslie Eckholdt, Matt Pieniazek and Mike Sullivan. Dan Mello was absent.

3. Minutes

Leslie Eckholdt moved to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2022, meeting. Mike Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Wilbur Shenk, yes; Matt Pieniazek, yes; Leslie Eckholdt, yes; Mike Sullivan, yes).

4. Regular Business

a) Treasurer's Report

Wilbur Shenk reported that the cash balance at the end of March was \$319,119, up \$5,310 from the previous month. Income for the month totaled \$7,825 and included \$5,000 from the Harbormaster for the lease of the docks, \$135 for a park-use application, \$2,000 for two of the winter fishing boats and \$686.67 from the City for 40% of the park manager's salary.

Expenses for the month totaled \$2,525 and included \$2,160 for the park manager, minute taker and bookkeeper; \$350 for the handyman and \$15 for miscellaneous projects.

Mike Sullivan moved to accept the treasurer's report. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Wilbur Shenk, yes; Matt Pieniazek, yes; Leslie Eckholdt, yes; Mike Sullivan, yes).

b) Approval of Bills

Matt Pieniazek move to approve payments to Edith Heyck in the amount of \$1916.67; to Gretchen Joy in the amount of \$165 for minute taking; to Roz Manley in the amount of \$673.75 for bookkeeping services; to Charlene Rowe in the amount of \$216 for work in the gardens; to Sharon Parker in the amount of \$189 for work in the gardens; to Tom Joy in the amount of \$475 for the assembly and installation of Adirondack chairs; to Edith Heyck in the amount of \$103 for a leaf blower and to Jim Maranto in the amount of \$472 for the repair of electrical boxes. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Wilbur Shenk, yes; Matt Pieniazek, yes; Leslie Eckholdt, yes; Mike Sullivan, yes).

5. Ongoing Projects

a) Commercial Boat Leases

Agreements have been reached for the three summer dock leases.

b) Parking Agreement

Negotiations on a new contract will be initiated with the Mayor at the end of the month.

c) Ad Hoc Central Committee on Market Landing Park Expansion

An exception was needed from the Commonwealth for the gender-neutral restroom design the Committee favored, which was refused. The Trust's recommendation of gender-neutral, outside-access restrooms was chosen as the alternative. The footprint of the proposed restroom building would be more compact and its location near Somersby Way would minimize the impact to views of the water. The Trust could recommend that plant materials should be installed to soften the appearance of the building from the Somersby Way.

Sasaki made a presentation to the Ad Hoc Committee on potential materials for the park. The Planning Office recommended the selection of materials that would maximize longevity and minimize maintenance, such as granite and pavers, despite the higher initial costs. The shared-use path would be paved with asphalt. Brick would be used for the Ways to the Water.

Sasaki also made a presentation to the Ad Hoc Committee on plant materials. The Trust emphasized the need for irrigation, both for the new beds and the existing gardens.

Jack Santos attended the Trust meeting to discuss the vision of Jeff Briggs to install busts to commemorate historical figures along Custom House Way. The goal would be to allocate space for the project at this time and to raise funds to acquire the pieces incrementally. Leslie Eckholdt said the theme should be confined to the history of the waterfront area. Matt Pieniazek will contact Andy Port about the proposal in an effort to have the topic raised at a future Ad Hoc Committee meeting.

d) Bulkhead Repair

The application for a \$1.65 million grant through the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission has been submitted. The City was appreciative of the Trust's commitment of \$50,000 to the bulkhead repair project.

e) Bill Harris Memorial

The total of donations is \$2,600. The Trust is interested in installing a plaque in a location that will be determined after the park design process has advanced further. The effort will be collaborated with the Maritime Society.

f) Brown's Wharf Sidewalk Extension

Steve Sawyer expects to complete the preliminary design for the extension of the sidewalk within the next two weeks.

6. Parks Committee Report

a) Park Use Applications

The Trustees had agreed at a previous meeting that the base price for Spring Fest would be \$1,600. The Chamber of Commerce asked that this amount be reduced. Wilbur Shenk said he would like to work cooperatively with the Chamber and suggested that the fee could be reduced 25%. He said the Chamber has done a good job of cleaning up the park after past events. Spring Fest would be the first commercial use of the park, which is of concern to the Trustees.

Mike Sullivan moved to approve a fee of \$1,200 for Spring Fest with the understanding the Trust has not committed to allowing it as an annual event. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Wilbur Shenk, yes; Matt Pieniazek, yes; Leslie Eckholdt, yes; Mike Sullivan, yes).

Fuel has not responded to the Trust's request for a payment of \$25 per class. The group is not expected to use the park this summer.

The Mom Comm Wellness Community has requested to hold exercise classes in the park three times per week for 26 weeks between May and October for a total of 78 classes. This is a for-profit business and the Trustees are concerned about the renting of the park as a corporate space. Leslie Eckholdt said the use would interfere with the peaceful enjoyment of the park. There is a need for consistency in the handling of park-use applications. Sarah Oleson has been given permission to hold yoga classes once per week. Music Together has requested to use the area near the restrooms three times per week for most of the summer. A policy should be developed for the potential commercial use of the expanded park. A specific area might be set aside for this type of activity. The Mom Comm Wellness Community will be informed that it would be permitted to use the park one time per week for twelve weeks with the condition that the classes are concluded by 10:00 a.m. The amount of the fee was not discussed.

Matt Pieniazek moved to approve an application for a Tai Chi demonstration on May 1 between 10:00 a.m. and noon with no fee. Mike Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Wilbur Shenk, yes; Matt Pieniazek, yes; Leslie Eckholdt, yes; Mike Sullivan, yes).

An application has been received for the Rhythm and Roots Festival on July 2. The proceeds of the event are used to support Newburyport Parks. Leslie Eckholdt moved to approve the application for the Rhythm and Roots Festival with a fee of 5% of the net profit or \$800, whichever is less. Mike Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Wilbur Shenk, yes; Matt Pieniazek, yes; Leslie Eckholdt, yes; Mike Sullivan, yes).

b) Park Manager's Report

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Edith Heyck reported she is working to replace or repair the signage in the park. A larger pedestrian crossing sign will be installed near the Harbormaster's facility. The roses near the Matthews memorial have been cut back and the scrub tree was removed. Four new Adirondack chairs have been placed along the berm. Of the 18 chairs that have been purchased over the years, 11 are remaining. The Trustees discussed ways in which theft could be avoided. The furniture has been set up in the Pop Up Park. Weeds are a serious problem in this location. Wilson Welding will be contacted about the installation of a second handrail on the granite steps. Phlox will be planted in the bank beds. An electronic application for events should be developed. The Parks Department would like to purchase plant materials for the Charles Nichols Garden, which is located by the Green Street parking lot, and is interested in having the Trust maintain it. This is City property and the Trust should not be involved with the project. The Trust should consider ways in which memorial donations could be incorporated in the expanded park. There are no remaining locations for benches.

7. Adjournment

Mike Sullivan moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m. Leslie Eckholdt seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Wilbur Shenk, yes; Matt Pieniazek, yes; Leslie Eckholdt, yes; Mike Sullivan, yes).